



AUGUST 2020



COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON

Guidelines for Employees Returning to Work on Campus

A three-phased process to return employees to working on campus in a safe and healthy manner.



COLLEGE of
CHARLESTON
HUMAN RESOURCES

The College of Charleston's protocols for responding to the COVID-19 pandemic are rooted in protecting the safety of our students, our employees and the public with whom we interact. It is a shared responsibility that we must all take seriously.

The College's decision to allow employees to return to campus to work will be based on guidance from the State Human Resources Division, the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Executive Orders issued by the South Carolina Governor and the rate of viral spread in the community, with care taken to provide for the safety of our employees.

In accordance with this guidance, the following **3-PHASE** guidelines have been developed to help inform departments and supervisors as we prepare for additional employees to return to campus. Given the fluidity of the situation, these guidelines may be changed as warranted and we encourage employees to closely monitor the latest CDC/DHEC guidance. No one, including the College, can completely prevent or control transmission of COVID-19; therefore everyone should take all necessary health precautions for your own personal safety, as well as the safety of those around us. For additional information on the College's response to COVID-19, go to <http://cofc.edu/covid19>.

Workplace Expectations & Guidelines:

All employees are expected to fully comply with the protocols and guidelines outlined in this document as part of the College's workplace expectations and guidelines. Failure to do so may result in corrective action.

If at any point you wish to report a concern regarding compliance with these guidelines, please contact Sandra Cultra in Human Resources at 843.953.7320.

Symptom Monitoring Requirement:

Employees who have been requested to return to the workplace must conduct symptom self-monitoring **every day before reporting to work**. You must be free of ANY symptoms potentially related to COVID-19 to be eligible to report to work.

At this time, these symptoms include one or more of the following:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Runny nose or new sinus congestion
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Fatigue
- New GI symptoms
- New loss of taste or smell



If you have any symptoms, please notify your supervisor immediately and do not report to work. You may consult Sandra Cultra with in [Human Resources](#) (843.953.7320) regarding work options and return to work requirements. Additionally, you are highly encouraged to contact your medical provider or our [TeleHealth](#) options for assessment and medical care. You may also wish to refer to the CDC's [symptom self-checker](#) to assist with self-monitoring and steps to take if you are symptomatic.

If you develop symptoms of COVID-19 while at work, you should put on your face mask, alert your supervisor, leave the workplace immediately, and seek appropriate medical attention, such as our TeleHealth options.

Employees in high-risk categories remain strongly encouraged to continue working remotely to the extent possible. According to the CDC, individuals with certain conditions may have a higher risk for COVID-19 infection. Those conditions may include:

- Older adults (aged 65 years and older)
- People with HIV
- Asthma (moderate-to-severe)
- Chronic lung disease
- Diabetes
- Serious heart conditions
- Chronic kidney disease being treated with dialysis
- Severe obesity
- Being immunocompromised

Employees who have been instructed to return to work on-site and have concerns about doing so due to a medical condition that places them in a higher risk group, those who are pregnant, or those who wish to seek disability-based reasonable accommodations related to returning to the workplace should contact the [Office of Equal Opportunity Programs](#) for assistance. Supervisors are asked to continue to be as flexible as possible in these situations.

Before Employees Begin Returning to Campus:

- Facilities Management and custodial staff will perform a thorough cleaning of campus facilities and office common areas on a scheduled basis.
- Department heads and supervisors should be certain to run individual faucets (labs, break areas, private restrooms, etc.) for about 10 minutes for the first day. Facilities Management has been maintaining the service mains, building main water lines and eye wash stations, but they need your assistance on the individual faucets.
- Sanitation supplies, such as disinfectants and hand sanitizer, will be available to departments through Central Stores.
- While employees are highly encouraged to provide their own face coverings, the College will provide reusable face masks for employees as needed. Disposable face masks will also be available as needed through Central Stores.
- Department heads should evaluate whether workplace modifications may be appropriate to maintain social distancing, at least **6 feet** of separation. For example, consider implementing one-way flow of movement through offices where doing so is feasible, or ensuring shared office work spaces are separated by at least **6 feet**.
- The College will post signage around campus to help ensure appropriate communication regarding safe and healthy protocols on campus.

During this phase, only those employees who cannot readily continue to work from home and those necessary to support ongoing critical operations may begin returning to work on campus. All other employees who can perform their job duties by working from home, with modifications and flexibility, should continue to do so to the maximum extent possible to promote social distancing.

Staffing During Phase 1

Department heads have discretion to determine which employees cannot readily continue to work from home; however, only employees who cannot readily work remotely and those necessary to support critical operations should return to the workplace. The College's operations will not be returned to normal functioning during this phase and will focus instead on critical operations. In this phase, the vast majority of employees should continue working remotely.

- Department heads are asked to be judicious in the number of employees returned to the workplace during this first phase to minimize the likelihood of disease transmission in the workplace and the community. **Only those employees who cannot readily complete their job duties while working from home and those necessary to support critical operations should be returned to the workplace.** Final decisions regarding who should be permitted to return to work on campus during this phase are the responsibility of the division head.
- Employees who can productively work from home, with modifications to allow for balancing child care responsibilities and other unique challenges relative to the pandemic, should be allowed to continue to do so.
- For employees who are returning to the workplace because they cannot readily continue to perform their job duties from home, department heads are asked to stagger staffing and/or develop alternative work schedules to the extent possible to limit the number of employees present in an indoor environment at one time. Department heads are asked to consider staggering the start and stop times of employees' shifts or adjusting entry points into the workplace to minimize congregation or close contact.
- All campus offices and departments should maintain a weekly schedule of the days and times when employees will be on campus, whether it's part of a work shift or to coordinate specific times when employees may temporarily visit campus to retrieve work items or for other work-related needs. The daily requirement to report to Human Resources the number of employees working remotely, on campus, or on leave will continue until further notice.

Face Masks/Cloth Face Coverings During Phase 1: All employees must wear a face mask or cloth face covering over the nose and mouth while on campus in the presence of others, including in public settings (e.g., common work spaces, meeting rooms, etc.). The mask will not be required when working alone in an enclosed office when others are not in the office. For those employees working outdoors, the face mask will not be required as long as at least 6 feet of social distancing from others is maintained.

However, when working outdoors, the face mask should be with you at all times and must be worn when at least 6 feet of distance from others cannot be maintained.

Appropriate use of face masks or coverings is critical in minimizing risks to others near you. You could spread COVID-19 to others even if you do not feel sick. The mask or cloth face covering is not a substitute for social distancing.

The purpose of masks is to keep respiratory droplets from reaching others to aid with source control. However, masks with one-way valves or vents allow air to be exhaled through a hole in the material, which can result in expelled respiratory droplets that can reach others. This type of mask does not prevent the person wearing the mask from transmitting COVID-19 to others. Therefore, CDC does not recommend using masks for source control if they have an exhalation valve or vent. While employees are highly encouraged to provide their own face coverings, the College will provide reusable face masks for employees as needed. Disposable face masks will also be available as needed through Central Stores. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth when removing your mask, and wash your hands immediately before and after removal.

For important information from the CDC regarding **how to properly wear and care for your face coverings**, please click [HERE](#).

Follow Public Health Guidance

It's ultimately up to each of us to protect one another. As such, employees who return to the workplace during Phase 1 should follow the following advice of public health officials:

- Stay home when sick or if you have been instructed by a health professional to quarantine due to close contact with someone with COVID-19.
- Stay at least **6 feet** away from others and wear a cloth face covering when in the presence of others, including public settings.
- Frequently wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (door handles, phones, keyboards, desktops, file cabinets, water coolers, coffee pots, etc.). Wherever possible, remove high-touch surfaces such as trashcan lids. Before and after you use the frequently touched item, wipe it down.
- Departments are responsible for ensuring that employees regularly wipe down shared equipment, including copiers, fax

PHASE 1

machines, and common workspaces before and after use. Avoid congregating in common areas such as break rooms and conference rooms.

- Conduct meetings through conference calls or other remote means (such as Zoom, Teams, etc.) even while employees are in the office to maintain social distancing.
- For additional guidance on how to protect yourself and others from the spread of the virus, refer to CDC guidance [HERE](#).

Vehicle Travel

If employees must travel in vehicles to perform their job duties, supervisors should limit the number of employees in a vehicle to the maximum extent possible and whenever possible only have one employee in a vehicle at one time. If the job duties of an employee require traveling with a crew in a vehicle, supervisors should instruct vehicle occupants to wear face coverings, use hand sanitizer and allow for the circulation of outside air.

Interactions with the Public

The College will continue to be closed to the public during Phase 1. If an in-person visit from a member of the public is absolutely necessary, an appointment should be made in advance and appropriate social distancing and face coverings must be used during the encounter.

Employee Exposure Protocols

If an employee who has returned to the workplace contracts COVID-19, the employee must immediately notify their supervisor and contact Human Resources immediately for further guidance. Do not report to work, seek medical care and assessment from your medical provider or contact our [TeleHealth](#) options. You will be required to self-isolate at home until cleared to return to work, generally at least 14 days.

- Employees exposed to a co-worker with confirmed COVID-19 should monitor themselves for symptoms and may be recommended for a 14-day quarantine based on the DHEC epidemiology team's risk assessment. Departments should contact [Human Resources](#) for further guidance and to coordinate the appropriate cleaning process.
- If an employee who is working remotely has a member of their household who tests positive for COVID-19, the employee should notify [Human Resources](#) before reporting to the workplace to allow the College time to develop a plan before the employee returns to the workplace. If the household member tests positive for COVID-19 after the employee is back in the workplace, the employee should not return to the workplace until they have discussed with the DHEC epidemiology team whether they need to isolate for 14 days.



CLOTH FACE COVERING:

Worn by the campus community, including faculty and staff, in shared, non-healthcare settings to reduce the wearer's ability to spread infection via respiratory droplets. These inexpensive face coverings can be made at home or purchased. Change and launder your face coverings daily. Store them in a clean paper bag when not in use.



DISPOSABLE MASK:

Also worn by the campus community, including faculty and staff, in shared, non-healthcare settings to contain the wearer's respiratory droplets. These masks should be discarded daily.



SURGICAL MASK:

Reserved for healthcare workers providing patient care. These masks reduce the wearer's spread of respiratory droplets and shield the wearer from large droplets emitted by others.



N-95 RESPIRATOR:

Reserved for persons at high risk of COVID-19 exposure, including healthcare workers, first responders, and clinical staff performing aerosolizing or procedures with high potential for viral transmission, or staff cleaning known COVID-19 contaminated spaces. These contain the wearer's respiratory droplets and protect the wearer from the finer respiratory droplet emissions of others.

PHASE 2 (Updated 8/12/2020)



On June 29th the state announced modified guidance to state agencies regarding Phase 2, which requires a return to normal service levels while maintaining minimal staffing levels. According to the updated guidance, agencies are to begin implementing Phase 2 on July 6th. As such, the College will implement a gradual, phased-in process to reopen some key services to the public.

During Phase 2, the College will gradually resume normal operations to the extent possible while adhering to social distancing and other public health-related recommendations. We will continue to stagger employees' return to workplace schedules or rotating teams of employees into the workplace on different days to promote social distancing. Work-from-home is still strongly encouraged to limit disease transmission.

Staffing During Phase 2

During Phase 2, employees whose in-office presence is not required to support normal service levels may continue to be permitted to work from home to decrease the amount of individuals present in the workplace. Additionally, employees who work in close proximity to other employees in an indoor environment may be permitted to work from home some days of the week to allow for social distancing. For example, an office employs 10 individuals in a cubicle environment may decide to assign 5 per day to be physically present in the office to allow more space between work stations and should require the remaining employees to continue to work from home on days they are not assigned to report to the workplace. Offices may also implement staggered schedules or rotating teams of employees into the workplace on different days to promote social distancing.

Final decisions regarding which services need to reopen and when, and who should be permitted to return to work on campus during this phase, are the responsibility of the division head. Only minimal staffing on campus for reopened services will be permitted, and all social distancing, face covering and other public health measures must be maintained.

Screening

As during Phase 1, employees who are directed to return to the workplace in Phase 2 are reminded to self-monitor symptoms and not report to the workplace if sick and/or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. Contact your supervisor immediately if you need to stay off campus.

Public Health Guidance and Workplace Modifications During Phase 2

Employees should continue to follow all public health guidance outlined in Phase 1 including social distancing, regular handwashing, cleaning high-contact surfaces, etc. All workplace modifications, display signage, and practices related to PPE and cleaning that were implemented in Phase 1 should be continued in Phase 2. Employees are encouraged to take periodic breaks in the workday to clean their work stations and high-touch areas in the personal work environment.

Face Masks/Cloth Face Coverings

Employees who return to the workplace during Phase 2 will follow the same guidelines as described in Phase 1.

Employees Who May be at a Higher Risk for Severe Symptoms or Severely Impacted by COVID-19

The College recognizes the clear need to be mindful of those among us who may be at a higher risk for severe symptoms or otherwise being severely impacted by COVID-19. It is in this spirit that we have developed a COVID-19 Special Request for Accommodation process. Accommodations may include, but are not limited to, telecommuting (where feasible), partial remote work, staggering schedules or a flexible work schedule. COVID-19 Special Request Accommodations are temporary in duration and will be adjusted as conditions warrant and based upon the needs of the College.

To get more information about the process and to apply for special accommodations, refer to the Employee Special Request for Accommodation Process at <http://cofc.edu/back-on-the-bricks/employee-information/accommodation/index.php>.

If accommodations beyond what your department head is able to grant are needed, or if you need disability- or pregnancy-related accommodations, please contact the Office of Equal Opportunity Programs at eop@cofc.edu.

Employees Impacted by Child Care Availability

If child care availability is limited and/or schools are fully or partially closed during all or part of Phase 2, supervisors are encouraged to provide scheduling flexibility and other accommodations to allow parents of children that require care to balance work and child care obligations. To get more information about the process and to apply for special accommodations related to child care concerns, refer to the Employee Special Request for Accommodation Process at <http://cofc.edu/back-on-the-bricks/employee-information/accommodation/index.php>.

Employees may also wish to refer to the webpage on Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) and Emergency Family and Medical Leave Act Expansion (EFMLA) published by Human Resources at <https://emergency.cofc.edu/families-first-coronavirus-response-act-employee-guidance>.

Conducting Meetings

During Phase 2, departments should continue to conduct internal meetings through telephone or video conferencing to the maximum extent possible to promote social distancing. In-person internal meetings resume only to the extent that social distancing is possible, and face masks/cloth face coverings are worn and should be done by scheduling appointments in advance.

Interactions with the Public

Departments may resume face-to-face interactions with the public necessary in normal service levels, but should rigorously manage those interactions to promote social distancing and reduce opportunities for transmission of the disease. For example:

- Both the employee and member of the public will be required to wear face masks/coverings throughout the interaction.
- To the extent possible, departments should identify one area within the office where all face-to-face meetings with members of the public will be conducted.
- Areas where face-to-face meetings are being held should have clear social distancing markings. Departments may procure marking supplies from Central Stores. Please refer to the CDC for [further guidance on social distancing](#).
- Areas where face-to-face meetings are held should be wiped down with disinfecting solutions or wipes after each meeting is concluded and before another meeting is held. Departments are responsible for ensuring that areas are thoroughly cleaned each evening.
- When at all possible, interactions should be done by scheduling appointments in advance.

Employee Exposure Protocols

All processes and procedures for handling a positive case in the workplace that were established during Phase 1 will continue during Phase 2.

PHASE 3

Phase 3 will commence based on the advice and guidance of DHEC, but at a minimum of two weeks following the start of Phase 2. During this phase, the College will return to normal operations. All employees should be returned to the workplace except for those who have been identified as appropriate for working from home permanently and those allowed to work from home as a temporary accommodation. The College will announce when we are prepared to advance to Phase 3.

- The ability of the College to move to Phase 3 is contingent on the advice of health professionals, the reopening of schools and the widespread availability of child care options.
- During Phase 3, it is expected that only those employees that were already working from home before the COVID-19 health emergency or those identified as being appropriate to remain on work-from-home status permanently due to the nature of their job duties and related cost savings will continue telework. All other employees will be returned to the workplace full time unless an accommodation is granted on a case-by-case basis.
- Recommendations regarding the use of face masks/cloth face coverings in the workplace during Phase 3 will be made at that time in consultation with DHEC.
- As in Phases 1 and 2, employees are not to report to the workplace if they are sick or otherwise exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19.

